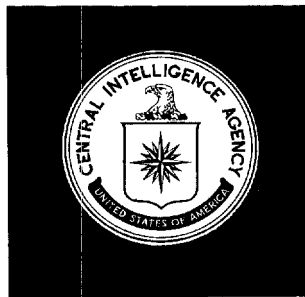


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Bahamas Handbook

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W A R N I N G

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INTRODUCTION

The Bahamas, a chain of islands and reefs in the Atlantic between Florida and Hispaniola, have enjoyed representative government as a British territory for 300 years. In 1964 the islands attained internal self-government, and will presumably gain independence within the next few years. Since 1967, Prime Minister Lynden Pindling and his predominantly black Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) have retained control of the government and have provided relative stability. An economic slump and personal rivalries, however, have created a split within Pindling's party, with dissidents calling for new leaders and new policies.

The islands were discovered by Christopher Columbus in 1492. Although they were technically in the Spanish sphere of the New World, the Spaniards made no attempt at colonization, and during the 16th century the Bahamas came to be regarded as a British possession. Pirates, marauding Frenchmen, and Spaniards disrupted efforts to establish a regular system of government until the islands became a crown colony in 1729. In 1783, British possession of the islands was confirmed by the Treaty of Versailles. It was not until 1964 that the first national government was formed.

From 1960-69 the Bahamas enjoyed a period of economic growth and prosperity surpassed only by a few of its Latin American neighbors, but in 1970 a recession began which curtailed the rapid growth in foreign investment that had played a large part in this advance, particularly in the promotion of tourism and the development of the city of Freeport. Tourism and resort development account for two thirds of economic activity. International banking and off-shore complexes, together with industries based on local natural resources—e.g., cement, salt, and aragonite mining—contribute most of the remainder of national income. Agriculture is only a very minor source of employment or foreign exchange.

Stable political development, although assisted by the existence of an orderly and representative democracy, is still far from ensured. The government must prepare for independence by improving its civil service and its educational system. Although the present government has made large investments in public education and has established a comprehensive civil service, major weaknesses in these areas remain the main obstacle to development.

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GEOGRAPHY

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I. GEOGRAPHY

Location and area

The Bahamas are an archipelago of some 3,000 coralline islands and rocks, only about 40 of which are inhabited. From the northern end of the chain, which lies 60 miles off the Florida coast, the islands extend more than 500 miles southeastward toward the island of Hispaniola; the total land area exceeds 5,000 square miles. The inhabited islands have a combined area of about 4,400 square miles, slightly less than that of the state of Connecticut.

Climate

The Bahamas have only two seasons. Winter is from December to May and summer from May through November. Temperatures are subtropical; the average temperature is 70 degrees F., with summer highs of about 85 to 90 degrees F. and high humidity. The annual rainfall averages from 46-52 inches, with the rainy months being May, June, September, and October. Winds seldom exceed 15 mph except during the hurricane season, which lasts from June to November.

Topography

The islands are of coral formation and are generally narrow and low lying. The highest point is about 400 feet above sea level. Andros is the largest island, but the most important is the small but densely populated island of New Providence. There are no streams and fresh water is obtained from shallow wells and rainwater collection.

Natural resources

The Bahamas have a pleasant and equable climate and plentiful beaches that make tourism the major industry. The islands are deficient in other natural resources, and their fractured geography poses special problems for economic development. Fertile land is scarce; only 1% of the islands' 4,400 square miles is cultivated. Salt from the surrounding seas supports one of the few industries. Some of the islands have forests, and lumber is an important export.

Human resources

The population of the Bahamas is increasing at an average rate of 3.4% a year. The extent to which the birth rate exceeds the mortality rate is

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comparable to that of other Caribbean territories, although immigration to the Bahamas has been considerably higher in recent years. The population is estimated at approximately 176,000 with the two islands of New Providence and Grand Bahama accounting for over 80% of the total.

At least a fourth of the labor force is employed in tourism, with the remainder involved primarily in farming, fishing, or domestic service. Although there is an abundance of unskilled labor, unemployment was practically nonexistent until the onset of the current economic slowdown. At present, approximately 7-10% of the labor force is out of work.

The native population is predominantly black (approximately 85%). The whites, who account for only about 15% of the total population, continue to constitute an economic oligarchy. Although the government has been run by the predominantly black Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) since 1967, the whites still control commerce and dominate the professions.

The American colony in Nassau, composed mainly of employees of US firms and retirees, numbers approximately 24,000. The tourist population is also large, 90% of which is American. Standard English is the official language, and foreign languages are used only in the small colonies of Greeks, Chinese, and Haitians that reside in the islands.

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ECONOMIC
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II. ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Growth rate and trends

The Bahamian economy suffered a setback in 1970 following a decade of rapid expansion, because of the falloff of tourists from the United States. Total visitor arrivals (usually 85-90% American) declined in 1970 about 3%, and US tourist expenditures dropped by 4% compared with annual gains averaging 21% during 1966-69. In addition, reduced tourist receipts, tight money in the United States, and the uncertain business climate have inhibited investment. Although the situation should improve when the economy of the United States recovers, it is unlikely that in the next few years economic growth will match the fast pace of the 1960s.

Main sectors of the economy

Because the islands have little fertile land or natural resources, the economy depends largely on earnings from external sources. The mainstay of the Bahamian economy is tourism and resort development. From 1960-69 the government's promotion of tourism met with marked success, especially with visitors from the United States. By 1969 tourism probably accounted for two thirds of GNP. Unfavorable publicity about Caribbean racial problems combined with the effect of the recession in the United States led to a decline in visitors. The government has mounted a publicity campaign to encourage a more favorable reception for tourists, but during the first six months of 1971 arrivals rose only slightly.

Since 1965 numerous investors have been attracted to Freeport by the Grand Bahamas Port Authority, Ltd., a private corporation which had until 1968 the authority to license businesses and until 1970 controlled immigration into the Freeport area. Chief among the new industries are an \$80-million oil refinery (designed mainly to supply New York City with desulfurized fuel oil), a \$50-million cement plant, a Mexican pharmaceutical plant, and a number of luxury hotels. By 1969, US direct investment in Freeport amounted to an estimated \$800 million.

Construction, a major employer of unskilled and semiskilled labor, is almost entirely tourist related and has been hit hard by the current economic slowdown. Construction on New Providence fell at least 11% in 1970 from 1969 levels. In Freeport, where much of the construction was based on speculative ventures, a number of firms have gone out of business, and the value of construction fell at least 80%.

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The Bahamas also developed as a financial center during the 1960s because of its tax haven status and its proximity to the United States. Tax exemptions on income, real estate, and capital gains combined with the lax incorporation laws have encouraged many banking and insurance companies to open offices for off-shore operations. By 1970 over 350 banks, including more than 60 branches of US banks, were in business in the Bahamas and employing some 1,800 Bahamians.

Manufacturing and light industry are slowly being developed in the Bahamas in the face of several unfavorable factors, such as a lack of skilled labor and raw materials, relatively high labor costs, and a small local market. A sugar factory, capable of producing 50,000 tons of raw sugar annually, closed in 1970 because of the inability to obtain a sufficient quota arrangement in preferential markets. Two salt extraction plants on the southern islands produce about 500,000 tons of salt a year. An estimated 700,000 acres of pine forest on the western islands constitute the basis for a small lumber industry. In the planning stages are a brewery, a paint manufacturing plant and a fish and shrimp processing firm.

Agriculture plays a small economic role, employing only 2% of the labor force and contributing little to the national income. There are large commercial dairy and poultry operations situated on Eleuthera Island. Fishing operations, based principally on the harvesting of crawfish, are run by individual fishermen. Cucumbers and tomatoes are the other major crops. Most foodstuffs must be imported.

Economic policy

The goal of Prime Minister Pindling's government is to make the Bahamas more independent of the United States economy and to provide opportunities for employment and advancement to Bahamians. Since 1969 the administration has tightened regulations for insurance companies and gambling casinos, restricted work permits for foreigners, begun to tax new foreign businesses, and increased expenditures for education and social services. In 1970 the legislature passed an act giving the government complete control over immigration at Freeport—thus abrogating part of the Hawksbill Agreement, which granted some local autonomy to Freeport investors.

Nevertheless the government still offers special customs concessions and special tax benefits to encourage manufacturing concerns to locate in the

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Bahamas. Under the Industries Encouragement Act of 1970, officially approved manufacturers may import raw materials, capital equipment and building supplies without paying import duties. These manufacturers are exempt from export and property taxes for 15 years after they begin production.

Another major governmental objective is to expand the social welfare system. Measures under consideration include a social security pension and health system, consumer protection regulations, and controls on the cost of living. Retail price indices show that inflation has been greater in the Bahamas than in the US, with the average annual increase running nearly 8% during 1967-70. Early in 1971 the government enacted price control legislation giving the minister of finance extensive regulatory powers over prices of goods and services.

Prime Minister Pindling is attempting to foster agricultural diversification and development of the Out Islands. He is trying to introduce farmers' cooperatives; an experimental government farm is beginning to assist farmers effectively; and a three-year land resource survey is providing guidelines for further development.

Foreign trade

The Bahamas economy is heavily dependent on foreign trade. Although the lack of national accounts makes it impossible to gauge this dependence, there is very little agricultural production for local consumption. Almost all capital and consumption goods must be imported. On the other hand, local production, limited as it is, is directed largely toward external markets. Until the recent economic recession the US share of the import market was 68%. This share has fallen at least 14 percentage points in the past year as other countries, notably the United Kingdom, Italy, Switzerland, and Japan have been giving the US stiff competition in most import categories.

The trade deficit—currently \$250 million—is getting worse. During 1969-70 exports rose 73%, with the initiation of fuel oil exports, but imports rose 88%. Tourist expenditures and foreign direct investment, however, have thus far offset the trade deficit and have allowed foreign exchange reserves to multiply.

Transportation and communications

There is an extensive system, some 270 miles, of good government-maintained roads on New Providence, and a total of 350 miles of roads on

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the Out Islands. Good asphalt roads on the Out Islands include those running the whole length of Long Island, Cat Island and Eleuthera, and one running along the south edge of Grand Bahama Island. Roads on the other islands are mainly cart tracks which are generally adequate for local needs. There are no railroads or internal waterways.

Because of the importance of tourism the Bahamas are dependent on ship and air communications. There are direct steamship connections with the United Kingdom, the United States, and South America. Merchant shipping is handled mostly by locally owned ships plying between Nassau or Freeport and Miami, Florida. The Out Islands are serviced from Nassau by regular local freight vessels. The Bahamas are well served both by international airlines and by local companies and charter aircraft linking Nassau with the Out Islands and a number of points on the Florida coast. There are 55 airports and landing strips in the Bahama Islands, of which nine are government owned. The United States Air Force maintains four airfields.

The Bahamas Telecommunication Corporation operates all types of communications services including telex, telegraph, long distance and overseas telephone services. In Nassau there is an automatic telephone system, while on the islands, comprising the Eleuthera and Abaco groups, there are small, manual exchanges. Wireless telegraph and radiotelephone services play an important part in maintaining contact among the various islands and with the outside world. Two radiobroadcasting stations are operated by the government with 50% of the programs commercially produced. A television station is reportedly scheduled for construction in the near future.

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POLITICAL
SITUATION
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III. POLITICAL SITUATION AND TRENDS

Historical summary

The Bahamas, a British possession since 1629, achieved internal self-government in January 1964, and will presumably gain independence within the next two to five years. The islands were claimed for Spain when Christopher Columbus sighted San Salvador (Watling's Island) in the Bahamas in 1492. The Spaniards made no attempt to colonize the islands and removed the original Indian inhabitants to work the mines of Hispaniola. In 1629 the islands were mentioned in a British royal grant for colonization. Following repeated raids by pirates and attacks by both French and Spanish forces, the Crown assumed direct control in 1729 and a House of Assembly, elected on a narrow property franchise, was set up.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the islands' fortunes fluctuated. As elsewhere, the abolition of slavery in 1838 caused a great economic and social upheaval, but the Bahamas enjoyed prosperity as a base for ships running the Northern blockade during the US Civil War and for liquor smuggling during the 1920s.

The constitution of 1729 remained in force with minor modifications until 7 January 1964, when the provisions of the Bahama Islands Order in Council of 1963 became effective. The first responsible government was formed by the United Bahamian Party (UBP), which bases its strength on the support of the predominantly white business elite. Following the first election under the new constitution, held in January 1967, power passed to the predominantly black Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) led by Lynden Pindling. As a result of a subsequent constitutional conference held in London, a revised constitution was issued in April 1969 delegating additional responsibilities to the Bahamian Government for internal security and foreign affairs.

Structure and functioning of governmental system

The 1969 constitution designates the prime minister the effective head of government. He shares his executive responsibilities with a cabinet, which must consist of at least eight members of whom one must be a finance minister, and is responsible to a 38-member House of Assembly. The assembly, elected by popular vote, is the principal legislative body. The Senate, composed of 16 members appointed by the governor, cannot initiate financial legislation, and can only delay the enactment of certain measures for a period of up to nine months.

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Although the governor, appointed by the British Crown, is the titular head of the government and has "ultimate responsibility" for defense and other external affairs, he must consult with elected Bahamian officials on these matters. The prime minister controls the police and exercises authority to negotiate foreign trade, labor and cultural agreements.

The Bahamas' legal system is based on English common law, with the Supreme Court enjoying the same jurisdiction as an appellate court in England. There is no provision for judicial review of legislative acts.

Technically the Bahamian Constitution is an Order in Council issued at Windsor Castle on 23 April 1969. Until independence is attained, this document presumably may be amended only by another Order in Council. The constitution begins with a statement of personal rights and freedoms similar to the Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations. It recognizes fundamental rights with respect to life, liberty, enjoyment of property and the protection of law, and the freedom of expression and of peaceful assembly.

Local governments are not mentioned in the constitution. Consequently the delegation of administrative authority is done through district commissioners who directly represent the governor in the various Out Islands. In addition to normal administrative duties they also exercise limited legal jurisdiction.

Political dynamics

In January 1967, Lynden O. Pindling and his Progressive Liberal Party (PLP) became the first black government in the Bahama Islands in over 300 years of political domination by a white plutocracy. Since then Prime Minister Pindling has managed to retain control despite efforts by dissidents within his party to unseat him. The Free National Movement (FNM), formerly known as the Free-PLP, is under the leadership of former Education Minister Cecil Wallace-Whitfield. After breaking away from the party in early 1971, the Free-PLP proved to be a more formidable opponent than the official opposition party, the United Bahamian Party (UBP), which currently controls only one fifth of the seats in the legislative assembly. In November 1971, the UBP's executive committee announced that it had merged with the FNM.

The PLP was founded in 1953 by a group of Negro leaders dissatisfied with the monopolization of political power by the small white business community that at that time had not been formalized by any political

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organization. Led initially by H.M. Taylor and Cyril Stevenson, the PLP called for better working conditions, agricultural and industrial development, and declared its opposition to Communism and other subversive movements. Its fundamental appeal, however, was to the black Bahamian. In 1954 Lynden Pindling became a party official and, following the general election two years later, he attained the post of parliamentary leader, a position he has held ever since.

The emergence of the PLP as the first political party in the Bahamas sparked a countermove by the conservative Nassau businessmen, popularly known as the "Bay Street Boys," to formalize their political control by creating the United Bahamian Party (UBP). Although the PLP gained legislative strength in the 1956 and 1962 elections, the UBP, under the leadership of Sir Stafford Sands and Sir Roland Symonette retained control of the legislature until 1967.

During Pindling's early years as prime minister he exercised strong control over his party machinery. Pindling's effective promotion of education, tourism, and industrial development prevented the UBP from exploiting major issues and reduced it to an ineffectual opposition led by old party hacks. In 1969 opposition to Pindling within the PLP began to form around the brilliant and ambitious Minister of Education Cecil Wallace-Whitfield. The rift, initially one of personal rivalry, widened with the economic slowdown as several cabinet members resigned and PLP backbenchers accused Pindling of suppressing the opposition and creating an atmosphere of fear. In November 1970, Pindling narrowly survived a "no confidence" vote.

In mid-1971, Wallace-Whitfield's group, the Free National Movement, refused official opposition status unless given the right to name four senators to which the opposition is entitled under the constitution. The Free-PLP has absorbed the National Democratic Party (NDP), a labor opposition group, while the UBP is attempting to change its conservative white image by its merger with the black Commonwealth Peoples Party (CPP). These maneuverings have contributed only marginally to the strength of the Free-PLP and the UBP, but they reflect a desire to absorb the smaller parties. Moreover, the political system as a whole is weak in that it consists of a divided black governing party with a number of splinter groups, and an opposition party which is ineffective because of its former role as the representative of an all-white oligarchy.

Elections are scheduled every five years unless the government loses a vote of confidence in the interim or simply calls a new election. The next elections must be held by 10 April 1973.

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All persons at least 18 years old who are citizens of the Bahama Islands or Commonwealth citizens resident in the Bahamas for at least five years are eligible to vote. At present about 20,000 of the estimated 65,000 eligible voters have not registered.

Black power

Despite the fact that approximately 80% of all Bahamians are black, "black power" as such has little force in the Bahamas. A youth organization and pressure group called Unicomm (The United Community), in existence since 1965, is pushing for a modified form of socialism as well as immediate independence. In July 1970, Unicomm held a seminar on racism at which Caribbean radical Trevor Munroe delivered emotion-charged speeches citing the need for a revolutionary black-power movement throughout the Caribbean and calling on the Bahamians to become more active toward this goal. While there are contacts between Unicomm and other radical groups in the Caribbean, Unicomm thus far has developed neither a wide base of popular support nor a working relationship with existing power groups in the Bahamas. According to a member of Unicomm, the group has 700 members and hopes to form its own political party.

Security system

The Royal Bahamas Police Force, a semimilitary organization of approximately 1,000, is the principal security force in the islands. Although the police commissioner is a professional British officer, his main responsibility is to the prime minister, except in the event of a major crisis when the British-appointed governor would presumably take charge. In addition to the regular police force, there are 110 auxiliary police, some of whom are former policemen, but all have had some training and are subject to call by the commissioner. The only other organized force which might potentially be used are the 141 guards assigned to the prison in New Providence. These men are trained essentially along the lines of a police force, but are not subject to the control of the police commissioner. The police are normally unarmed, in the British tradition, but have access to small arms when needed. Riot control training is under way, and additional instruction is scheduled under a \$600,000 grant from the British Government. There is also a plan to expand the force to 1,200 men, if funds are forthcoming.

A weak area of defense, however, is the air and marine patrol capability. There is no air force, but recently the government purchased four patrol boats which are equipped with mounted machine guns.

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The police are highly respected and appear to be well-disciplined and loyal to the government. There is no evidence that they have been significantly influenced by black power or other radical forces. The available security forces on the two major islands, New Providence and Grand Bahama, can maintain order under most anticipated conditions. The Out Islands, however, which are policed by local constables, lack sufficient forces to suppress possible disorders and would have to be reinforced from one of the major islands. At the present time, the capability for quickly responding with reinforcements is low.

Until independence occurs, the United Kingdom will retain responsibility for external defense with Governor Cummings-Bruce acting as commander in chief in the event of hostilities. The British maintain two frigates headquartered at Hamilton, Bermuda, each with a complement of 200-250 men. These frigates theoretically patrol between Bermuda and the southern tip of South America. The area which they cover, however, is so vast that they are in the vicinity of the Bahamas only about once every two to three months.

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SUBVERSION

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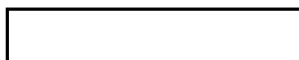
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IV. SUBVERSION

There is no Communist party in the Bahamas nor any active subversive groups that pose a threat to government stability. The potential for subversive activities in some of the isolated Out Islands does exist, however. In May 1968, a group of Haitian exiles launched an abortive incursion of Haiti from the Bahamas. Cuban exile groups also have used the Bahamas for training purposes, and the Cuban Government has branded the islands as a staging area for invasion attempts.

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ARMED FORCES

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VI. ARMED FORCES

The Bahama Islands have no army, navy, or air force. The United Kingdom is responsible for external defense, and most Bahamians believe that the United States would defend their country against any major threat. For this reason, the Cuban/Soviet threat in the Caribbean is remote to them, and little or no thinking has been done about defense relationships. The sporadic patrols of British guardships in Bahamian waters and the unrestricted ability of the US Coast Guard to operate in this area against Cuban and anti-Cuban activities is largely taken for granted.

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FOREIGN
RELATIONS

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VII. FOREIGN RELATIONS

Strictly speaking, the Bahama Islands are still a colony of the United Kingdom and until the colony achieves independence, the governor, as the representative of the Crown, will retain ultimate control over external relations and defense. Although the government of the Bahamas does not maintain diplomatic or consular offices in other countries, the prime minister has had the power to conclude foreign trade agreements since 1969 and the governor consults with him and other Bahamian officials on all important matters.

Expecting independence within the next two to five years, the Bahamian Government has expanded its regulation of foreign-owned insurance companies and gambling casinos, and has passed legislation aimed at curbing immigration. After many public officials had complained that Freeport was a white American enclave, the legislature passed an act in February 1970 which gives the government complete control over immigration at Freeport. The Bahamas continue to provide incentives for US investment, but immigration restrictions and tighter controls over foreign enterprises reportedly have undermined investor confidence and led to a significant loss in government revenue. Recently the Pindling administration has indicated its intention to renegotiate the agreement regarding US military base rights at the time of independence. While there is no indication of local sentiment for the expropriation of business interests or the removal of US military bases, the potential for difficult problems over the next few years is high.

The Bahamas lie outside of the West Indies geographically and politically. The colony refused to join the West Indies Federation or the Caribbean Free Trade Association and has expressed only limited interest in the Caribbean Development Bank. At various times the Bahamas have complained about illegal immigration from Haiti and some of the Out Islands have been used by both Cuban and Haitian exile groups for clandestine activities.

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VIII. US INTERESTS

The US financial and military presence in the Bahamas is larger than anywhere in the Caribbean area. During the 1960s the Bahamas attracted considerable commercial investment by offering tax holidays and other incentives for industrial development. By 1969 total private US investment in the islands was estimated at \$1.2 billion with Freeport accounting for approximately \$800 million. The Bahamas rank as the fourth largest center for US capital in Latin America, exceeded only by Venezuela, Brazil, and Mexico. Major US enterprises include an \$80 million oil refinery (designed primarily to supply New York City with desulfurized fuel oil), a \$50 million cement plant, and a number of financial institutions and luxury hotels.

Economic aid from the United States for the period 1956-1969 amounted to \$34.8 million in loans from the Export-Import Bank and \$.3 million in grants. The US is the Bahamas' leading trading partner, accounting for 67% of total trade. The United States Air Force operates a number of missile tracking stations in the Bahamas which are associated with Patrick Air Force Base near Cape Kennedy. Navy and Coast Guard installations are located on several of the Out Islands. In addition, the US Navy's Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Center (AUTEC), an important facility for undersea warfare research and development, is located on Andros Island.

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T A B L E S

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TABULAR DATA

Holidays and significant dates

1 January	New Year's Day
March-April	Good Friday
March-April	Easter Monday
24 May	Commonwealth Day
12 June	Sovereign's Birthday
21 October	St. Ursula's Day
14 November	Prince of Wales' Birthday
25 December	Christmas Day
26 December	Boxing Day

Selected Factual Data

LAND

Total square miles: 5,386, of which 1% is cultivated, 29% forested, 70% built on, wasteland, and other.

PEOPLE

Population: 176,000, average annual growth rate 3.4% (November 63-April 70)

Ethnic groups: 80% Negro, 10% white, 10% mixed

Religion: mainly Church of England; some other Protestant, Greek Orthodox, and Roman Catholic

Language: English

Time differential: GMT — 5 hours

GOVERNMENT

Type of government: British dependent territory with full internal autonomy with Colonial status in British Commonwealth; parliamentary form of government

Branches of government: cabinet headed by prime minister, 38-member House of Assembly, 16-member Senate (appointed by Governor after consultations with prime minister and opposition leader); judiciary follows British tradition under a chief justice

Government leader: Prime Minister Lynden Pindling

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Government attitude toward US: friendly
Capital: Nassau
Regional breakdown: 18 seats for Out Islands, 20 seats for New Providence
Principal political parties and leaders: Progressive Liberal Party (PLP), Lynden Pindling; United Bahamian Party (UBP), Sir Roland Symonette; Free National Movement (FNM), Cecil Wallace-Whitfield
Voting strength: (April 1968) PLP 73%, UBP 27%
Suffrage: universal, adult
Next national election: by or before April 1973
Member: The Commonwealth, Caribbean Development Bank, University of West Indies, represented in certain international organizations by the British

ECONOMY

GNP: not available
Agriculture: main crops—cucumbers, egg plant, tomato juice, bananas, citrus fruit
Major industries: tourism, oil refining, cement, lumber, salt production
Electric power: 59,750 kw. capacity (1970) million kw.-hr. produced (1969 est.); 1,095 kw.-hr. per capita
Exports: \$46 million (f.o.b., 1969); cement, rum, pulpwood, fruits and vegetables
Imports: \$251 million (c.i.f., 1969); foodstuffs, manufactured goods, petroleum
Major trade partners: U.S. 67%; U.K. 11%; Canada 7% (1968)
Aid: economic—authorizations from U.S. (FY56-69)—\$34.8 million in loans
Monetary conversion rate: 1.00 Bahamian dollars (B\$)=US\$1 (official)
Fiscal year: calendar year

COMMUNICATIONS

Railroads: none
Highways: 555 mi.; 380 mi. paved, 100 mi. gravel, 20 mi. improved earth; 55 mi. unimproved earth
Ports: 5 major, 9 minor
Civil air: no major transport aircraft
Airfields: 56 total, 51 usable, 8 with permanent-surface runways; 3 with runways 8,000-11,999 ft., 21 with runways 4,000-7,999 ft; 4 seaplane stations
Telecommunications: highly developed

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DEFENSE FORCES

Local Security forces: Royal Bahamas Police Force, 1,000; Prison Guards, 141; Auxiliary police, 110

Ships: 4 patrol boats

U.K. is responsible for external defense; the Senior Naval Officer, West Indies (SNOWI), headquartered at Hamilton, Bermuda, has 2 frigates, each with a complement of 200-250 men, assigned to his command; one frigate carries a detachment of 20-30 royal marines; the British Armed Forces maintain a company of Caribbean-area-trained Royal Marine Commandos in the U.K. for immediate airlift to the Caribbean

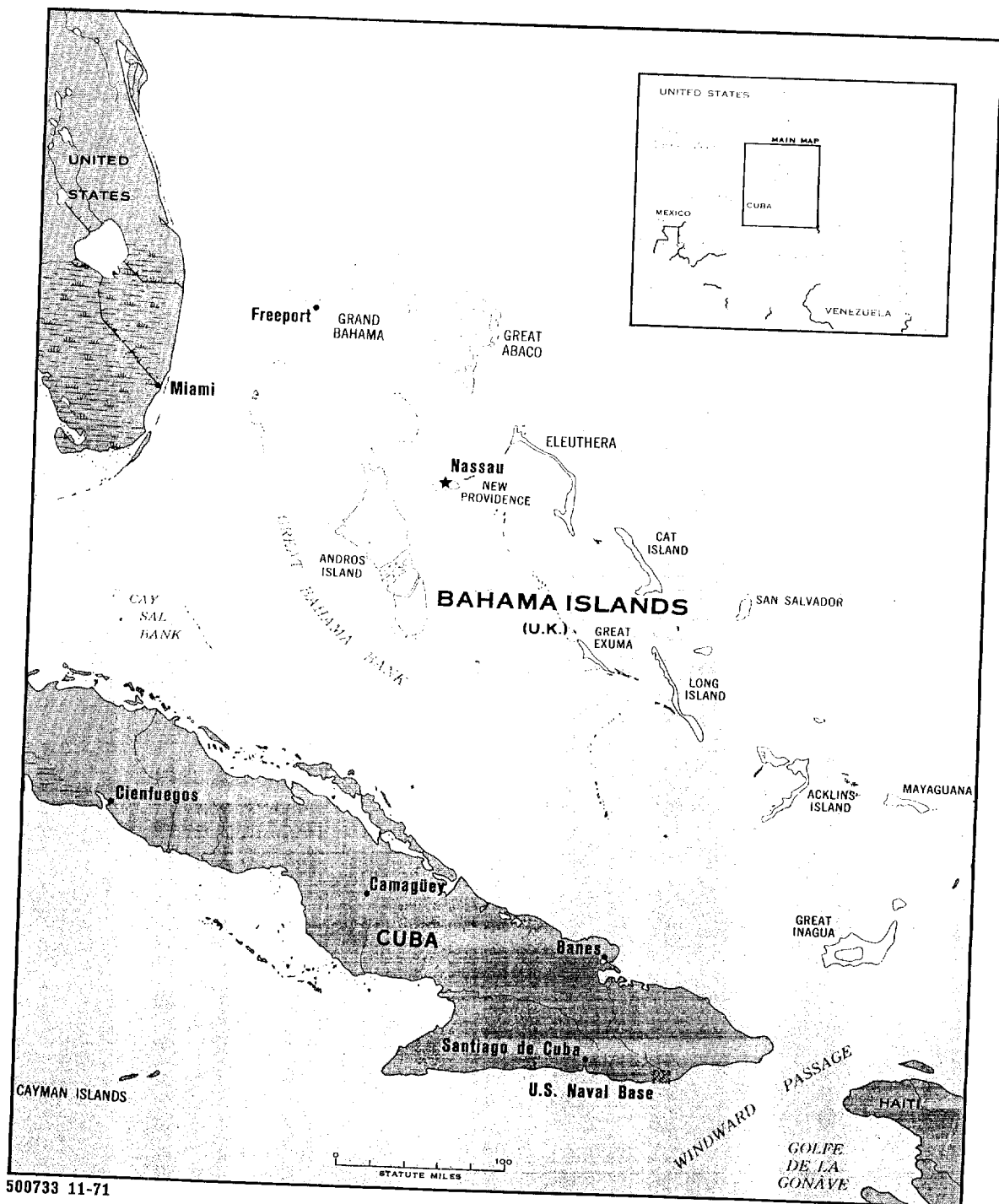
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